

Dear Local Food Economy Stakeholder:

King County has a long history of preserving farmland and supporting farmers and farmers markets in King County. The Farmland Preservation Program is 30 years old, and has saved roughly 14,000 acres of our most productive agricultural lands. King County launched “Puget Sound Fresh” in 1998 to support farmers markets and to promote farm products grown, raised or harvested regionally. More recently, the County partnered with the City of Seattle in a program to use revenue generated from selling rural development rights to preserve more farmland – especially active farms that supply Seattle’s farmers markets and restaurants.

King County residents currently spend nearly \$6 billion per year on food and drink; however, less than 2 percent of that amount goes to farmers for food grown in King County. To address this opportunity, King County Executive Dow Constantine launched on June 23, 2014, a Local Food Initiative with two major goals:

- Expand our local food economy to ensure job growth and economic vitality for the food and agricultural industries.
- Improve healthy, affordable food access in low income communities.

Leading this effort is the County Executive’s Kitchen Cabinet, comprised of leaders from King County’s agricultural community, grocery retailers, restaurants, produce distributors, farmland preservation, human service NGO’s, academics, local and state partners, and other community members. The list of Kitchen Cabinet Members is available at: <http://www.kingcounty.gov/exec/local-food/About.aspx>.

Since June, the Kitchen Cabinet have met 13 times to identify strategies to increase local food production in King County and improve access to healthy food for all County residents, but particularly those most in need. They have developed the attached draft recommendations, which are intended to address the two goals set by Executive Constantine. The draft recommended targets, strategies and actions fall into two categories: (1) those affecting local food production and (2) those affecting food access.

I ask that you take some time to review the Kitchen Cabinet recommendations and provide us with your feedback on the attached summary document.

- Will the proposed goals, strategies, and actions achieve the targets?
- Are the draft recommendations ambitious enough?
- What is missing? Are there other major ideas or initiatives that the Kitchen Cabinet should have considered?

Based on the feedback the Cabinet members receive, they will modify the draft recommendations accordingly and develop a final set of recommendations and actions to be presented to the County

Executive by the end of 2014. A summary of the proposed Kitchen Cabinet recommendations is attached, and a complete list of the Kitchen Cabinet's draft recommendations is available on-line at:

<http://your.kingcounty.gov/dnrp/local-food/documents/2014-Healthy-Food-Access-Plan-draft.pdf>

<http://your.kingcounty.gov/dnrp/local-food/documents/2014-Food-Economy-draft.pdf>

Sincerely,

Christie True, Director
DNRP

DRAFT Kitchen Cabinet Recommendations

October 30, 2014

Increasing Local Food Production

Increasing local food production and demand for local food is a major focus of the Kitchen Cabinet. To advance the Local Food Initiative the members of the Kitchen Cabinet set 10-year goals related to local food production, and corresponding actions to achieve those goals.

Food Production/Demand Targets

- Add 400 net new acres in food production per year in King County (2% per year)
- Add 25 new farmers every year while sustaining current farmers
- Double demand for locally produced food
- Reduce food waste by 25%

To achieve these goals they are recommending a set of actions that are intended to make it easier to farm in King County, increase demand for King County local farm products, and reduce the amount of food wasted in the County. Among the major initiatives recommended by the Kitchen Cabinet are:

Making it Easier to Farm

- Create a “One-Stop” economic development office for farmers
- Develop a Land Lease Program for start-up farmers
- Start a Cooperative Farming Pilot - offering access to technical assistance, shared equipment and access to markets, particularly for minority and low-income farmers
- Form a Watershed Improvement District in Snoqualmie Valley that allow farmers to trade water rights
- Undertake a countywide effort to permanently preserve the remaining unprotected farmland
- Expand incubator farm programs with an emphasis on minority farmers
- Develop affordable farmworker housing
- Expand meat processing capacity in King County/leverage existing capacity in Pierce/Snohomish counties

Increasing Demand for Local Farm Products

- Provide a marketing specialist to connect King County farms to institutions and retail – increase local food sales
- Increase municipal/county support for farmers markets – increase the number of farmers markets
- Incentivize restaurants to coordinate with local farmers and buy seasonal crops – increase direct sales to restaurants
- Increase the development of Food Innovation Districts – create centers of local economic activity to support the local food economy

- Create regulatory/financial incentives for value added food processing and food hubs – create more processing and aggregation outlets for local farmers
- Integrate incentives to buy healthy local food into corporate/government wellness programs – grow the market for local food and educate people about the benefits of healthy local food

Decreasing Food Waste

- Food Too Good to Waste campaign – educate local businesses/residents about the importance of not wasting food
- Expand food gleaning programs in King County – connect food banks/local food programs with local farmers to use non-marketable but high quality produce

Increasing Access to Healthy Food

The Kitchen Cabinet recognizes the inequity of access to healthy food and the adverse impact – hunger and poor health - that this has on disadvantaged members of our community. The members of the Kitchen Cabinet set two goals to address this fundamental inequity:

- Increase consumption of fruits and vegetables among youth and adults, reduce disparities in fruit and vegetable consumption, with an emphasis on local fruits and vegetables
- Increase food security for all King County residents

To realize these goals, the Kitchen Cabinet is advancing policy initiatives that leverages the purchasing power of large public institutions (hospitals, schools, child care centers), enhances the resources available to low-income residents, and educates the public on the benefits of healthy food.

- Increase the number of healthy food procurement policies in King County Institutions (schools, child care, hospitals) - require King County institutions to buy local produce
- Increase the number of King County farmers markets that accept SNAP and “Fresh Bucks” – provide more low-income residents with the ability to shop for fresh local produce
- Increase the number of healthy food procurement policies in large gathering places (community centers, worksites, recreation/cultural settings, etc.) – engage big private sector institutions (e.g. mall food courts) to set policies for serving healthy food
- Pilot a universal school meal program with a King County school district
- Increase summer meal participation rate - Increase the number of summer meal sites in low income neighborhoods to 40 days or more
- Implement educational campaigns to increase fruit/vegetable consumption
- Increase the number of community and school gardens in low-income communities